

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 11614 141936Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1262
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BANJUL
AMEMBASSY BISSAU
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMENASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 11614

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PROG, AORG, XY
SUBJECT: IVORY COAST NOMINEE FOR ECOWAS
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: BOUBACAR OUATTARA
REFS: A) STATE 278230, B) ABIDJAN 11613 (NOTAL)

1. DURING AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT YACE, DECEMBER 13, YACE SPOKE OF
IVORIAN INTEREST IN ECOWAS AND SAID THAT "THE YOUNG MAN
WE HAVE CHOSEN" AS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY WAS DIRECTOR OF
BIAO (BANQUE INTERNATIONALE POUR L'AFRIQUE OCCIDENTALE)
AND PARTICULARLY WELL QUALIFIED. BIAO DIRECTOR IS
BOUBACAR (BOB) OUATTARA, ONE OF IVORY COAST'S MOST ABLE
YOUNG BUSINESSMEN AND ECONOMISTS, AMERICAN EDUCATED AND
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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 11614 141936Z

A CLOSE FRIEND OF THIS EMBASSY. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT HAS

NOT BEEN MADE PUBLICLY. YACE MAY HAVE BEEN INDISCREET, AND WE HAVE NOT MENTIONED MATTER TO OUATTARA. REQUEST INFO BE CLOSELY PROTECTED UNTIL ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE.

2. OUATTARA WAS BORN 1938 IN DALOA, IVORY COAST, ALTHOUGH HIS FAMILY ARE OF MALINKE TRIBE FROM ODIENNE IN NORTHWEST. AFTER ABIDJAN UNIVERSITY HE RECEIVED AN MA IN ECONOMICS FROM SYRACUSE, AND DOCTORATE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION FROM HARVARD. HE WAS THE FIRST IVORIAN EXECUTIVE EMPLOYED BY BIAO, BECAME ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF IVORY COAST BRANCH IN 1974, AND ITS DIRECTOR IN 1975. MARRIED, ONE CHILD. WIFE, CONSTANCE IS FROM BENIN, AND STUDIED AT MIT.

3. OUATTARA IS SINGULARLY, FORTHCOMING AND FRIENDLY, RELAXED WITH AMERICANS, AND SPEAKS FLUENT ENGLISH, WHICH HE SPICES WITH AMERICAN IDIOMS. HE HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE WITH U.S. BUSINESSES HERE, AND PARTICULARLY HELPFUL AND INFORMATIVE IN DEALING WITH THE EMBASSY. HE IS INTELLIGENT AND ARTICULATE, AND, WE GATHER, WELL PLUGGED IN WITH MANY SENIOR IVORIAN OFFICIALS. THE APPOINTMENT OF A PERSON OF THIS CALIBRE TO ECOWAS JOB SUGGESTS SERIOUS IVORIAN COMMITMENT TO ITS SUCCESS.
STEARNS

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